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# Legion

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Citizens of Berlin stand amid rubble near the edge of Tempelhof Airfield to watch an American C-47 cargo plane arrive with food and supplies in July 1948, part of the Allied effort to counter a Soviet blockade of the city during the Berlin Airlift. Getty

### READY TO RIDE

Team Legacy passes through North Dakota along the American Legion Memorial Highway, U.S. 281, Aug. 1 en route to Great Bend, Kan., to meet Team Vision, traveling north on 281 from the Mexico border. The teams fastened together two halves of an American Legion centennial banner signed by more than 60 post commanders along the Centennial Ride route, and delivered it onstage at the 101st American Legion National Convention in Indianapolis. Photo by Dan Koeck



*The American Legion Magazine*, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its nearly 2 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 13,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.



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#### DATES OF

April 6, 1917 – Nov. 11, 1918

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#### SERVICE

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### 'Mefloquine Mondays'

As a former DoD employee who was prescribed antimalarial mefloquine (Lariam), I read Ken Olsen's article with avid interest.

During my first assignment to West Africa in 2000, I experienced nausea due to mefloquine but did not suffer the neurological injuries – manifested by nightmares and vertigo – that some fellow DoD employees experienced, probably because I stopped ingesting the mefloquine while there. During subsequent duties, I chose to take Malarone (at my own expense) instead of mefloquine. Malarone gave me no discernable side effects, and was more effective than mefloquine in preventing a dangerous form of malaria: *Plasmodium falciparum*.

It is a travesty that DoD employees and servicemembers were given mefloquine in malarial areas when safer alternatives were available.

– Ralph Groves, Winter Garden, Fla.

I was deployed to Palmerola (now Soto Cano) Air Base in Central America multiple times, and took this drug on every trip. Bottles of it were on the silverware racks in the mess hall and everyone was directed to take it once a week. During one deployment, some soldiers thought they were supposed to take it every day. I don't know what weeks' worth of daily doses of mefloquine does to a person, but I do know that unit had a very high rate of UCMJs and discharges. I seriously doubt any of this made it into anyone's medical records; it's not in mine. If a nationwide poll is conducted about this issue, let's include everyone who was given this treatment.

– David Arthur, Raeford, N.C.

### 'Citizenship Through Sportsmanship'

As a former Legion Baseball player, I quickly turned to the article by Jeremy Field (August). It described what the Legion hoped to achieve by improving fitness through athletics as well as developing citizenship and sportsmanship.

The article became personal for me when it told of Babe Ruth being paid by Ford Motor Co. to promote American Legion Baseball. This was my era! There was a rush of memories when I got to the mention of the Babe's last appearance at Spencer, Iowa, in 1948.

Everyone knew the Babe had been sick for some time, but he scheduled one more trip to help Legion Baseball by traveling to



Des Moines, Sioux City and Spencer – all in Iowa – and then on to Minneapolis. Spencer is the seat of Clay County, in which Peterson – population about 675 in 1948 – is located. Peterson was and is a baseball town, and Dean-Underwood Post 10 had sponsored Legion Baseball for years. To our excitement, the team was invited to participate in Spencer's Babe Ruth Day.

Unknown to us, our manager went scouting for players from teams up to 50 miles away. Our high school coach, Don Tracy, assisted in coaching the team. He was a good baseball man and team organizer but had decided he wanted the team to make a big showing at the tournament.

When the team began to arrive, there were six or eight strangers in the group. A pitcher-catcher battery from a distant town started the game, doing well the first three innings but allowing five runs in the fourth.

When the fifth inning was over, the manager told a battery from another town to get ready. Coach Tracy countermanded him. He said, "Kelly is going to pitch." The manager said, "Oh, OK," and that was it.

By now the banquet sponsored by the local Ford dealer was over and they brought Babe to the ballpark. He sat on the back of the rear seat of a convertible.

I pitched the last two innings of not-spectacular ball against a strong team, but I was in the game. Ours was the last game of the evening. Afterward the Babe spoke to the crowd, but his voice was raspy due to earlier neck operations. After he spoke, all

the teams crowded around him and a picture was taken.

On the way to Minneapolis that evening, the Babe took sick and was put on a plane for New York, where he was hospitalized and died a short time later. I was so thankful for Coach Tracy getting me into the game, since I had the honor of pitching the last couple of innings of baseball Babe Ruth saw. Seventy-one years later, when I mention this to my old teammates, their standard response is, "You know what killed the Babe!"

– Donald T. "Kelly" Meyer, Denver, N.C.

### 'Run, Recover, Repeat'

The article about Legionnaire Billy Richards (August) was wonderful. I appreciate his presenting the U.S. flag when he runs. We've had military people do the same in the Pittsburgh Marathon. Unfortunately, few people seem to know they should salute when the flag passes. I hope his experience has been better in that regard.

– Jerome W. Silverstein, Verona, Pa.

**Editor's note:** Billy Richards belongs to American Legion Post 1528 in Depew, N.Y.

### 'Honor Restored'

While I heartily applaud the efforts of Post 206 (Rapid Fire, August), I recommend research before cleaning headstones. Power washers and stiff brushes will over time damage natural stone such as granite and marble. Many people think of these as being indestructible, but they are far from it.

I have been doing the same

volunteer work here in Walla Walla Valley with the entire Fort Walla Walla Cemetery and 47 headstones of the county's World War II casualties. The local monument company recommends D/2, a biologic that goes after molds, mosses and lichens that grow on natural stone. I strongly encourage anyone who wants to properly clean a headstone – a family plot, individual or large number – to look at this product online. It includes a video and chemical component information.

– Sherilyn Jacobson, College Place, Wash.

### Miss Montana

I just received my August issue and read the letter regarding the C-47 aircraft N24320, named "Miss Montana" to honor D-Day and its service to the state of Montana's smoke jumper history.

A point of clarification: N24320 did not participate in any of the D-Day sorties or activities on June 6, 1944. It came off the assembly line on May 3, and was too late to be used as a D-Day aircraft. It did finish its military career as a service and cargo military aircraft.

When it was mustered out of service, N24320 and three other June 1944 C-47s were purchased by Johnson Flying Services and used for cargo and fire service work. Most notably, N24320 was the aircraft used by smoke jumpers during the 1949 Mann Gulch Fire.

– Glenn Shorney, Lincoln, Neb.

**Correction:** In September's Rapid Fire, two C-130s were incorrectly identified as C-47s.

## THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS

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# STILL SERVING AMERICA

YOUR AMERICAN LEGION AT WORK

“The Legion is family-oriented anyway ... anytime that we have the opportunity to get kids in here and young families, that’s a win-win. Why would you not want that? It’s an opportunity to bring the Legion and families together.”

**Vista, Calif., American Legion Post 365 Commander Steve Miller** after his post conducted a family play day in July, in support of a Spring 2019 National Executive Committee resolution encouraging special family-oriented events to bring communities together



Photo by John West

# 1

Ranking of *The American Legion Magazine* among 179 U.S. magazines in terms of readership frequency

# 44,278

Downloads of The American Legion’s membership app as of July, up from 35,382 the previous year

## SERVING YOUTH

**196** American Legion, Sons of the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary members who completed the Basic Training online leadership education module on **legion.org** in July

**73** Years American Legion Boys Nation has taught young men the structure and function of federal government

**\$131,855** Amount in American Legion national scholarship funds disbursed to college-bound youth in July

**\$30,000** Amount of a check presented by Virginia American Legion Rider Randy Gunn to 2018-2019 American Legion National Commander Brett P. Reistad on Aug. 21, from two in-state fundraising rides, to support the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, which provides college assistance to the children of U.S. military personnel who lost their lives or became 50 percent or greater disabled on duty since 9/11.

## SERVING VETERANS

**13,000+** Respondents to an ongoing 2019 American Legion mental-health survey, of whom 40 percent were unaware that VA mental-health benefits and services were available to them

**\$1,357,541** Minimum amount in funds donated by American Legion posts to local VA health-care facilities in the 2018-2019 membership year, with 69 percent reporting their contributions

**5** Employment workshops conducted by The American Legion at Fort Hood, Texas, on June 18, where 80 wounded active-duty soldiers received transition assistance from the Legion

**3,500** Active-duty military personnel and spouses who met with 200 employers at the June 19 Mega Job Fair at Fort Hood, supported by The American Legion. More than 400 soldiers provided their names for additional information to learn more about American Legion membership and services.

**125** Veteran and military career events hosted, sponsored or supported by The American Legion’s National Employment & Education Division in 2019





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*"There's always a niche to be filled.  
We're here to help our community."*

## SANDRA KEE

It's hard to overlook Capt. Lester S. Wass American Legion Post 3 in Gloucester, Mass. Not only is the post's historic building in the center of the nearly 400-year-old city, with the harbor at its back, but its members serve others year-round.

"Our community thinks of us as a pillar," says Sandra Kee, Department of Massachusetts vice commander and 16-year member of Post 3. "When you have a community like this and a town like this, it just brings something special to the plate. All the children and youth organizations know if they need a place to hold a function, the Legion will help them out. We like to think of our post as a community home."

You'll find members of Post 3 front and center at Gloucester's biggest and most-loved events. They host the nine-day St. Peter's Fiesta Novena, have a prominent spot in the annual Fishtown Horribles Parade, and deliver hundreds of meals at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Kee finds joy in strengthening those ties through service.

"What inspires me to give back to the community of Gloucester is the smile on people's faces when you do it," she says. "It's not about me. It's not about the post. It's about being a part of something bigger than either of those two things. If that's not inspiration enough, I don't know what is."

— Henry Howard

**BRANCH OF SERVICE** Navy (1991-1994)

**RANK** Petty officer third class

**MILITARY JOB** Electronics technician


**AMERICAN LEGION POST** Capt. Lester S. Wass Post 3, Gloucester, Mass.

**YEARS IN THE LEGION** 16

### LEGION ACTIVITIES

- Post commander (2005-2007)
- District commander (2014-2015)
- Department vice commander (2018-present)
- Department Legion College training and education chairman (2018-present)
- National Marketing Commission (2017-present)
- National 21st Century Ad Hoc Committee (2017-present)
- National American Legion College graduate (2016), facilitator (2018)

Watch an interview with Sandra Kee online:

 [legion.org/magazine](https://legion.org/magazine)

See an archive of past interviews:


 [legion.org/iamlegion](https://legion.org/iamlegion)

Photo by David DePolo



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# Iran war powers amendment



## SUPPORT

### Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va.

■ Kaine is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

In June, President Trump told us the United States was 10 minutes away from war with Iran. That would have been a colossal mistake.

U.S. servicemembers should never be treated as political pawns. Yet this president acts as if they are toy soldiers he can move around a table.

Our inability to have a real debate in Congress about what another war would do to our country and our troops is a constitutional failure and a moral one. The Constitution says it's up to Congress to declare war. To ignore the Constitution and send our troops into harm's way without a public debate, or explanation of why we are asking them to risk their lives, is the height of immorality.

That's why, on June 13, Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., and I introduced a bipartisan amendment to the fiscal 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to prohibit offensive military operations against Iran without explicit authorization from Congress. While our amendment didn't reach the 60-vote threshold needed to pass, the final 50-40 tally in favor of it demonstrated a strong bipartisan concern that Trump might drag our troops into an unnecessary war.

In July, the House passed a similar amendment, by a vote of 251-170, to prevent federal funds from being used for any military force in or against Iran without congressional authorization. This means there is now an opportunity for both chambers to come together to pass a final defense bill that prevents Trump from bypassing Congress to start a new war.

As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I believe it is our duty to ensure the United States will not send our troops into war based on the whim of the president.



## OPPOSE

### Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark.

■ Cotton is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, where he chairs the Subcommittee on Airland.

Iran is engaged in a campaign of violence in the Persian Gulf, menacing one of the world's busiest trade routes and shooting down a U.S. drone.

While Iran confronted us in the Middle East, the Senate considered an amendment to restrict the president's freedom – as well as our troops' freedom – to fight Iran without the explicit approval of Congress.

The amendment would have placed unacceptable limits on the freedom of U.S. troops to respond to Iranian

violence. The amendment included only a vague allowance for our military to "defend against an (Iranian) attack," providing no guidance about what that would mean in practice. If a U.S. aircraft were attacked by Iranian missiles, could it eliminate the Iranian battery that fired the missile? Could it eliminate support structures nearby? Would that count as self-defense, or would that airman need to wait for Congress to give him or her the green light? The amendment doesn't explain.

Our troops need to know they can fire when fired upon in the field, without politicians looking over their shoulder. That's not what they would have gotten with this amendment.

Ultimately, this amendment would have sent a clear signal to Iran's ayatollahs that the United States won't respond swiftly to attacks against our interests or allies, encouraging Iran to attack with greater frequency and intensity.

No amendment can change the iron laws of geopolitics: strength deters and weakness provokes. Wars are not won by paper resolutions, but iron resolution. This amendment embodied irresolution, weakness, timidity, diffidence. The Senate was right to reject it.

## THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

*The Senate rejected an amendment to the defense bill that proponents said would prevent an unconstitutional war with Iran. Critics argued the measure would curb the president's authority to respond to an attack.*

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# The promise of immunotherapy

Media Bakery

*Advances in treatment open a new front in the fight against lung cancer.*

BY BETH W. ORENSTEIN

Lung cancer is among the most frequently occurring forms of cancer in men and women. Only prostate cancer is more common in men and breast cancer in women, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS). Further, lung cancer is the most lethal type of cancer. More adults die each year of lung cancer than colon/rectum, breast and prostate cancers combined, the ACS reports. Lung cancer causes more than 154,000 deaths in the United States each year – 25 percent of all cancer deaths. The most common type of lung cancer is non-small cell (NSCLC), which can be very aggressive and was until recently uniformly fatal.

**RESEARCH AND RESULTS** The good news is that major advances in the treatment of advanced stage 4 NSCLC are improving the outlook for those battling this aggressive cancer, says Angel Qin, a medical oncologist and lung cancer specialist at the University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center in Ann Arbor. “We are seeing very encouraging results from new immune therapies that work with the body’s own immune system,” she says.

Traditional approaches such as chemotherapy and radiation work by attacking and destroying cancer cells, Qin adds. But immune therapies are designed to stimulate a patient’s own immune system so that it recognizes and destroys cancer cells more effectively.

One immunotherapy for NSCLC, pembrolizumab (Keytruda), has received much attention recently. One study, known as the KEYNOTE-189, showed that combining pembrolizumab with chemotherapy or other treatments increased survival. In this study, patients with Stage 4 non-squamous NSCLC were randomly divided into two groups. One group was given a combination of two chemotherapy drugs, which is the standard of care, and the other was given two chemotherapy drugs and pembrolizumab. After one year, about 70 percent of the patients who received pembrolizumab were alive, while only about 50 percent of the patients who did not receive the antibody were, Qin says.

Updated results of this study were presented in June at the American Society of Clinical Oncology meeting in Chicago. They showed that at two years, 38 percent of patients on combination chemotherapy and pembrolizumab were alive, compared to 14 percent of patients receiving only chemotherapy. Another similar study, KEYNOTE-407, found similar benefits of adding pembrolizumab to chemotherapy in patients with Stage 4 squamous NSCLC, Qin says.

Other immunotherapy drugs such as nivolumab, atezolizumab and durvalumab have also shown promise, Qin says. For example, atezolizumab is also

See **IMMUNOTHERAPY** on page 16





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**REFERENCES:** 1. FreeStyle Libre 14 day User's Manual. 2. Data on file. Abbott Diabetes Care.

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**CONTRAINDICATIONS:** Remove the sensor before MRI, CT scan, X-ray, or diathermy treatment.

**WARNINGS/LIMITATIONS:** Do not ignore symptoms that may be due to low or high blood glucose, hypoglycemic unawareness, or dehydration. Check sensor glucose readings with a blood glucose meter when Check Blood Glucose symbol appears, when symptoms do not match system readings, or when readings are suspected to be inaccurate. The FreeStyle Libre 14 day system does not have alarms unless the sensor is scanned, and the system contains small parts that may be dangerous if swallowed. The FreeStyle Libre 14 day system is not approved for pregnant women, persons on dialysis, or critically-ill population. Sensor placement is not approved for sites other than the back of the arm and standard precautions for transmission of blood borne pathogens should be taken. The built-in blood glucose meter is not for use on dehydrated, hypotensive, in shock, hyperglycemic-hyperosmolar state, with or without ketosis, neonates, critically-ill patients, or for diagnosis or screening of diabetes. Review all product information before use or contact Abbott toll-free 855-632-8658 or visit [www.FreeStyleLibre.us](https://www.FreeStyleLibre.us) for detailed indications for use and safety information. For full indications for use and safety information, visit <https://www.FreeStyleLibre.us/safety-information.html>.

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**IMMUNOTHERAPY** *continued from page 14*

approved for stage 4 non-squamous NSCLC in combination with chemotherapy.

Immunotherapy is not a cure for NSCLC and not all patients who receive it do well, Qin cautions. However, one factor that may be a clue as to how well patients will do is the level of a protein called PD-L1 in their cancer.

“Patients whose tumors have a high level of this protein seem to be more likely to respond to immunotherapy, as was shown in the KEYNOTE-024 study,” Qin says. However, some patients with low PD-L1 and some with high PD-L1 have not responded too well, so more research is needed.

**PERSONALIZED TREATMENTS** Most patients tolerate immune therapy well. “The most common complaint we hear is fatigue, often when they are receiving chemotherapy as well,” Qin says.

Because immunotherapies “supercharge” the immune system, there is an increased risk that the immune system could attack healthy tissue, too. Some of these side effects can be serious, so patients should speak to their doctors about symptoms and concerns. Also, the safety of immunotherapy in patients with certain autoimmune diseases – including lupus or rheumatoid arthritis – is unclear.

In addition to immunotherapies, researchers are looking at more personalized treatments for lung cancer, Qin says. “Now that we have the ability to sequence or map an individual’s tumor, we can look for more specific ways to attack its mutations.”

For example, researchers have found “driver mutations” in a small percentage of lung cancers. These mutations act as green lights for the cancer to progress. Four targeted oral chemotherapies, available in pill form, have been approved that are designed to stop these “switches” from turning on.

The ultimate goal, Qin says, is to learn which approach is most likely to be most successful in each patient. That’s why she encourages patients to discuss participation in clinical trials with their doctors and to explore all possibilities. **Lungcancer.org** has a way to match patients with lung cancer trials at **app.emergingmed.com/lcctacc/home**. You can also find clinical trials supported by the National Cancer Institute at **cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/clinical-trials**.

*Beth W. Orenstein, a freelance medical writer in Northampton, Pa., is a frequent contributor to Living Well.*



## SUNSCREEN for your eyes

Sunglasses should be more than just fashion accessories, according to HealthDay.

“Think of sunglasses as sunscreen for your eyes,” says Dianna Seldomridge, clinical spokeswoman with the American Academy of Ophthalmology. “Your eyes need protection from the sun’s damaging ultraviolet rays, just like your skin.”

Eye experts advise wearing sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB radiation. “You may be confused by labels that say the sunglasses provide 100 percent protection from UVA/UVB radiation, while others offer 100 percent UV 400 protection. Both will block 100 percent of the sun’s harmful radiation,” HealthDay reports.

If you aren’t sure how much your sunglasses block, take your shades to an optical shop, eye doctor or ophthalmologist. These offices usually have a UV light meter capable of determining the UV-blocking levels of glasses.

UVA/UVB protection is important throughout the year, Seldomridge adds. “Make sure your eyes are protected year-round. Harmful UV rays are present even on cloudy days.”

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.



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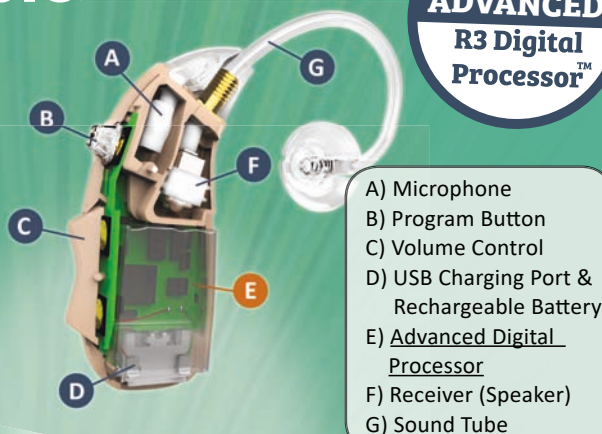


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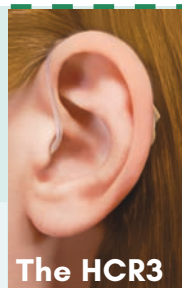
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# 5 FALL FESTIVALS TO VISIT

*Immerse yourself in food, folklore and foliage.*

BY LYN METTLER



Matthew Noel/Houma Area CVB

A July study from TripAdvisor found that [more than 70 percent](#) of respondents always or frequently read reviews before making decisions about where to stay and eat or what to do. Four out of five people say the reviews they read on TripAdvisor accurately reflect their experiences.

From the changing of leaves and cooler weather to pumpkins and Halloween, there's much to enjoy in fall, and festivals around the country are a fun way to celebrate the season. Here are five events worth checking out:

**Virginia Thanksgiving Festival, Charles City, Va., Nov. 3** This festival celebrates the 400th anniversary of America's first English Thanksgiving in the New World, when Capt. John Woodlief declared the day his group of settlers landed on the James River to be "kept holy as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God." Attendees can join in colonial period games and dancing, see a 17th-century sailing ship, and watch a parade and puppet performance.

**Twin Cities Oktoberfest, Oct. 4-5** Raise a pint to celebrate Oktoberfest in St. Paul and Minneapolis. This festival, in its 10th year, includes authentic German food, live music, traditional German entertainment and shopping, including limited-edition steins.

**Half Moon Art & Pumpkin Festival, Half Moon Bay, Calif., Oct. 19-10** Celebrate all things pumpkin at Half Moon Bay on California's northern coast, known as the World Pumpkin Capital. Don't miss the contest for the biggest homegrown pumpkin (some weigh more than 1,000 pounds), and watch master carvers create amazing jack-o'-lantern designs. There's also live music, lots of pumpkin pie and the Great Pumpkin Parade.

**Rougarou Festival, Houma, La., Oct. 26-27** Parents used to tell their children the legend of the Cajun werewolf to keep them out of the sugar fields – often a dangerous place for kids – and the Rougarou remains a large part of Cajun folklore today. In fact, there's an entire family-friendly festival dedicated to it: a parade of giant puppets, appearances by the Rougarou, a costume contest and even a Cajun French-speaking tent where you can try speaking the native language.

**Open House Chicago, Oct. 19-20** If you've ever wanted to step inside some of Chicago's most famous buildings, renowned for their architecture and design, this is your opportunity. Hosted by the Chicago Architecture Center, this free festival offers behind-the-scenes access to more than 250 buildings across the Windy City, including skyscrapers, repurposed mansions, opulent theaters, private clubs, private offices and sacred spaces.

*Lyn Mettler is a freelance travel writer who blogs at [GotoTravelGal.com](#).*

Beginning Nov. 9, Indianapolis will host a [nightly salute to veterans](#) at dusk at Monument Circle downtown. The three-minute light show will include projections on buildings set to music and conclude with taps.

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TO STRENGTHEN A NATION / THE AMERICAN LEGION STORY

## PART 14

# OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED



World War I veterans vie for jobs at an employment office in Los Angeles set up by The American Legion in 1919. Getty Images

*The American Legion, from the beginning,  
has worked to help veterans make transitions.*

BY JEFF STOFFER

In the aftermath of the Revolutionary War, Daniel Shays was the namesake of a violent rebellion involving thousands of veterans who had fought for independence and came home to find their farms in foreclosure. Taxes had accrued. Bank debts had mounted. They received little or no pay for their time in service. Efforts by the veterans to find peaceful solutions through the courts were unsuccessful. Shays was a combat captain who had fought at Bunker Hill, Saratoga,

Lexington and Concord, and he was one among many across New England who would launch the ultimately ill-fated uprising.

Some 4,000 farmer-veterans found themselves in a sprawling military conflict against the country they had sworn not only to defend, but to help invent. Six of Shays' rebels were killed by state militia, two were hanged, and many others were arrested. Three government soldiers who had been given authority to shoot on sight also died fighting in Shays' Rebellion. Most of the

veterans, including Shays, were pardoned a year after the rebellion was put down, but their message resonated in Independence Hall, as the U.S. Constitution was being drafted, and in decades to come.

The economic treatment of veterans after military service had not been a success story of early America. Policies and programs of the 19th century did little to improve the situation. And so, the newborn American Legion of the 20th century made a top priority of helping veterans



“Securing government compensation for the civilian wages lost during the war required an effective lobbying organization, a role The American Legion assumed with gusto from 1922 to 1924, once its members made their wishes known ... No one anticipated in 1917 how influential this generation of citizen-soldiers would become.”

*Jennifer D. Keene, “Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America,” 2001*

find rewarding civilian careers as employees, farmers or entrepreneurs, with preference in pursuit of government jobs and civil service.

“In my city we have already said, ‘Look here, man, you’d better post every job that is open, and post it in the place where returned soldiers get employment,’” Chaplain John Inzer of Alabama told his fellow American Legion founders at the May 9, 1919, session of the St. Louis Caucus where much of the organization’s foundation was poured. “And they have gotten down to that. We want to talk about that today and get down to business – the business of getting jobs for our men.”

A resolution at the St. Louis Caucus established a philosophical direction that would drive legislation, federal policy, public opinion and American Legion ideology for the future. The resolution contained three key prongs:

- That “no act of the United States can be more unpatriotic” than failure to help wartime veterans readjust and return to work;
- War veterans deserve “preference whenever additional men are to be employed in any public or private enterprise; and,
- The American Legion recommends to Congress “prompt enactment of a program” to help veterans find employment, with preference, at a time when they were flooding back into the work force. In communities large and small,

#### March 20, 1922:

National Commander Hanford MacNider designates American Legion Employment Day.

By June 1, 1922, the campaign is estimated to have secured jobs for 500,000 out of 700,000 employment-seeking veterans.

American Legion posts became hubs of economic hope for men and women who had been to war. Government programs followed American Legion initiatives, including local post transportation to mines and logging camps in the 1920s.

The American Legion worked with industry, both local and national, to get veterans into careers that would make the most of their military training and experience.

The Great Depression triggered the violent 1932 Bonus March in Washington, D.C., where some 17,000 destitute veterans massed to demand early payment of promised adjusted compensation for time spent at war. Bonds for adjusted compensation were not set to mature until 1945, and The American Legion was divided on the issue until the 16th National Convention in 1934, which put the organization’s growing might

behind immediate payment. By summoning the Army to drive bonus marchers out of Washington, Herbert Hoover put his presidency on the line, which Franklin D. Roosevelt seized the following year. It was, in a way, another Shays’ Rebellion.

A repeat Bonus March got started in 1933 but fizzled after new first lady Eleanor Roosevelt met with the first wave of protesters. Her solution: ease the burden of getting jobs for veterans in the Civilian Conservation Corps, which built thousands of roads, bridges and dams during the Depression.

The American Legion, backed by the 1934 resolution, continued fighting for early payment of the bonds and drafted legislation to that effect, which was passed in January 1936, immediately vetoed and then overridden. By April that year, nearly 3 million veterans had applied for newly authorized early compensation.

During the 1930s, The American Legion worked with Congress to establish job-counseling and placement services for veterans as a permanent government responsibility. The Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 created the Veterans Employment Service, which The American Legion strongly supported.



Library of Congress

**May 1930:** The American Legion signs an agreement with the Department of Labor to use local posts across the country to screen veterans for job placement.



"From whatever angle we contemplate the coming post-war situation, a primary conviction must be that freedoms toward living a normal American life are empty privileges without opportunities for work."

**Jay Hormel** of Austin, Minn., vice chairman of The American Legion's National Employment Committee and president of Hormel Foods, writing in the January 1944 American Legion Magazine

World War II threatened to have an even greater effect on newly discharged veterans. By 1943, some 75,000 GIs were being medically discharged per month. They came home to scant support from a government deep in a two-front world war. American Legion posts, churches, families and local charities typically absorbed disabled veterans as they waited for any sign of support, including disability compensation.

Out of that reality came the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (the GI Bill), which aimed to help disabled veterans receive training and education for new careers. Free college for all qualified veterans launched millions of careers after the war, but the bill also made low-interest farm and business loans available to hundreds of thousands. World War II veterans who used the GI Bill transformed the U.S. economy in the second half of the 20th



*George E. Williams of Columbus, Ohio, a World War II Navy veteran blinded in the left eye, became an on-the-job trainee under provisions of the GI Bill.* American Legion Archives

**June 22, 1944:** The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 is signed into law, opening unprecedented opportunities for veterans seeking education, employment, farm loans and business opportunities.

The original GI Bill is estimated to have produced:

- 450,000 engineers
- 240,000 accountants
- 238,000 educators
- 91,000 scientists
- 67,000 doctors
- 22,000 dentists

century and ignited decades of prosperity, giving birth to the "great American dream."

Two weeks after the GI Bill was signed by President Roosevelt, The American Legion notched another legislative victory when the Veterans Preference Hiring Act was passed, giving veterans points advantages when applying for U.S. government jobs.

The GI Bill's success proved what can happen when economic support is an integral feature of the readjustment process. As new GI Bills were drafted and passed, veterans not only proved their value in the civilian economy, but public perception began to change.

No longer the disgruntled and broke farmer rebels of Shays' time or the marchers driven out

**June 27, 1944:** The Veterans Preference Hiring Act is signed into law after fierce lobbying from The American Legion. The battle to give veterans additional points when pursuing federal employment had gone on since the 1920s. The measure is seen as a breakthrough and a foundation for future employment policy by the U.S. government.



*A 1971 American Legion "Jobs for Veterans" job fair in Fargo, N.D., brought together more than 50 prospective employers and some 500 recently discharged Vietnam War veterans.*

American Legion Archives

**Nov. 11, 1970:** The American Legion Economic Commission's "Jobs for Veterans" program, which had been piloted in 17 states, is expanded to go nationwide. On Jan. 5, 1971, American Legion National Commander Alfred P. Chamie is appointed by President Nixon to serve on the Jobs for Veterans National Advisory Committee. During this time, some 80,000 Vietnam War veterans are being discharged every month and entering civilian lives.





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Veterans attend the LA Hiring our Heroes Hiring Fair at Hollywood American Legion Post 43 in Hollywood, Calif., which included workshops on how to make successful résumés and use LinkedIn. Justin L. Stewart/The American Legion

of Washington by the Army, veterans have since become sought-after targets of personnel recruitment by most major companies who appreciate their teamwork, discipline and mission awareness.

The battle to keep stimulating veteran career opportunities has proven continuous.

Early in the post-9/11 era, veteran unemployment spiked to nearly 1 million. The American Legion, by that time, had allied with other organizations, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, to conduct career events across the nation for veterans and their families. Adding in job fairs at local posts and state American Legion departments, the organization had a hand in nearly 1,200

career events a year. Since then, veteran unemployment has fallen to about the same rate as the non-veteran workforce, or lower in some areas.

The American Legion also has worked for decades to improve transferability of military training time into credits toward licenses and credentials in specialized civilian career fields.

“Civilian licensing agencies must recognize military training, education and experience when a veteran transitions to the civilian workforce,” then-American Legion National Commander Fang A. Wong told Congress in 2011. “A soldier who drives a truck in a convoy through hazardous routes in Iraq can drive a truck to get eggs to market on time in the American

Midwest. A Navy corpsman who saved Marines on the battlefields of Afghanistan has the skills to render emergency aid as an EMT back home. Yet the education, training and experience garnered from military service is not recognized by civilian licensing and certification agencies.”

Ten months after that testimony, President Barack Obama signed the Veterans Skills to Jobs Act that took into account military training in applications for federal employment in fields requiring certification or licensing. The American Legion continues to work for adoption by states and private industry. It also continues to conduct hundreds of job fairs and business workshops throughout the country each year.

As The American Legion enters its second century of support for career-seeking veterans, many issues still exist on the policy and legislation fronts, but the organization continues to work primarily face-to-face, veteran-to-veteran to prevent anything resembling the uprisings of 1786 and 1932 from happening again. 🌿

Jeff Stoffer is editor of The American Legion Magazine.

**July 23, 2012:** President Barack Obama signs into law The American Legion-backed Veterans Skills to Jobs Act that makes it easier for qualified, military-trained veterans to gain certification and licensure in specialized career fields. Two months earlier, Obama announced the establishment of the Military Credentialing and Licensing Task Force in the company of American Legion Department of Minnesota Commander Charles Kruger and Department Adjutant Randy Tesdahl.

The task force and new law represent a major breakthrough in The American Legion's long battle for fair transfer of military training experience into credits in specialized fields.



**Sept. 10, 2018:** The American Legion's LinkedIn page surpasses 10,000 followers. The social media platform, used largely for networking, had quadrupled in audience since 2014. The American Legion Career Center e-newsletter, launched Jan. 12, 2015, reaches more than 7,000 veterans a month by 2018, providing information about career events nationwide and tips for veterans to convert their military experiences into successful careers.





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# LORE OF THE LEGION

STORY: JEFF STOFFER  
ART: GARY MARTIN  
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IN OCTOBER 1993, LEGIONNAIRES BILL "POLKA" KALEIDAS AND CHUCK "TRAMP" DARE FROM POST 396 IN GARDEN CITY, MICH., HAVE AN IDEA TO UNITE THE ENTIRE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY. THE COMMON DENOMINATOR: LOVE OF MOTORCYCLES.

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IT ATTRACTS 62 BIKES AND RAISES ABOUT \$170,000, PROMISING ENOUGH TO BECOME AN ANNUAL EVENT.

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A SIGN SEEN IN A FLORIDA CHAPTER'S POST HOME IS NOW ADOPTED BY MANY OF THE RIDERS, WHO ALSO PROVIDE ESCORTS AND SECURITY AT MILITARY FUNERALS: "IT'S THE CAUSE... NOT THE APPLAUSE."

**NEXT:**  
THE USS AMERICAN LEGION



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*Bill Oxford visits the Lenoir Veterans Memorial, where the names of several classmates and friends are listed on a plaque honoring local men who died in the Vietnam War.* Photo by Schelly Stone

# LOVE FOR THE LEGION

*Bill Oxford of North Carolina steps into the role of national commander.*

**BY MATT GRILLS**

**B**ill Oxford joined The American Legion twice. The second time, it stuck.

After returning from Vietnam in 1970 and hanging up his Marine dress blues, Oxford enjoyed Saturday night dances and parties at a Legion hall in Hickory, N.C. In time, though – busy building a family and a career – he let his membership lapse.

Fast forward 16 years. At a Legion Baseball game in his hometown of Lenoir, Oxford ran into an old friend. They'd played sports together as boys. Say, would he be interested in helping out with the local post's Legion Baseball program?

"I said, 'I can do that,'" Oxford recalls.

He went to his first meeting at Dysart-Kendall Post 29 knowing next to nothing about it, and walked out as commander. "It was all downhill from there," he says, joking.

Quite the opposite, actually. Hooked on the Legion's commitment to veterans and youth, Oxford has spent 33 years volunteering at every level of the organization, from post adjutant to district and department commander to chairing the National Legislative Commission.

Now he's embarking on his biggest job to date: national commander of The American Legion. Elected Aug. 29 at the 101st National Convention in Indianapolis, Oxford is the third national commander to hail from North Carolina.

"My love for the Legion goes back to the fact that we serve America's veterans," he says. "Our country has an obligation to provide for them when they come home. We have to let them know we respect and honor their sacrifices. We cannot let them down."



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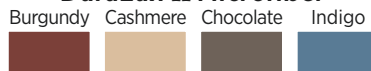
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Bill Oxford met his wife, Frances, before entering the Marine Corps in 1966. "He went off to the service, wrote me a letter, and said, 'When I get home, we're getting married,'" she recalls. "Vietnam was going on and you couldn't be sure about anything." Photo by Schelly Stone

**YELLOW FOOTPRINTS** Oxford's family has lived in and around Lenoir for generations. They came from England in the late 1700s, landing in the Hampton Roads area and fanning out from there. His ancestors include a fearless circuit preacher (known for placing two pistols on the pulpit and saying, "I'm preachin' and you're gonna listen") and a great-grandfather who at 14 helped amputate limbs of wounded Civil War soldiers (rejected from serving because of his age, he volunteered as a surgeon's assistant).

As for Oxford, he grew up in the countryside outside Lenoir, one of seven children. His father worked in a furniture factory, his mother in a cotton mill. Few in Oxford's family had served in the military, but he knew early on that would be his path. When a Marine Corps recruiter knocked on their door, "all he had to do was reel me in," he says. "I was on board. One of the smartest things I've ever done."

He remembers the trip to basic training, with "the bus stopping at every wide place in the road to pick up guys heading to Parris Island. We arrived after dark and pulled up in front of the receiving station, and the biggest, meanest, loudest, gruffest man you ever heard jumped on and started barking commands."

Etched in Oxford's memory are the famous yellow footprints, painted on the pavement to help recruits learn how to stand in formation. Eyes wide, hanging on the drill instructor's every word, Oxford knew his life was about to change.

"Had I not been able to make that transition from civilian to Marine, I would not be who I am today," he says.

From there, Oxford went to Camp Lejeune, then Naval Air Station Memphis to learn aviation electronics, Cherry Point, N.C., and finally Chu Lai, Vietnam, where he joined VMA(AW)-533, an A-6 Intruder squadron.

There, Oxford worked the night shift repairing planes, from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. "I did my job, went home, slept and came back the next day," he says. "I thought everybody was in the jungle, fighting the Viet Cong. It really was not what I expected."

When Oxford's mother died unexpectedly, he returned to the United States. Not too long after that, he and his wife, Frances, welcomed their first child and he left the service. But Oxford's time in uniform was just beginning. He followed his father-in-law and two brothers-in-law into the North Carolina National Guard, where he received a commission in 1973. He later transferred to the Army Reserve, retiring as a colonel in 2001.



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**TEAM EFFORT** Oxford's military experience led to work in the electrical field, and eventually a position as a safety and environmental manager. Retired from that too, now, his time fully belongs to his family and The American Legion.

The Oxfords live near their children, Charlie and Jackie, and their families. Over the years, they've made it a priority to be on the sidelines cheering when one of their four grandsons – Isiah, Micah, Jaggar and Dawson – has played a sport.

"Soccer, football, basketball, golf – whatever it was, he'd say, 'Go for it, put everything you have into it,'" Isiah says of his grandfather. "That's how he is with everything he does."

Charlie was in high school when Oxford attended his first Legion Baseball game and took on the role of announcer. His dad told him it was another way for him to serve, even if he wasn't in uniform.

Oxford has the same perspective about his more recent volunteer work at a local hospice facility, where he presents flags to veterans' families and recites the poem "In Flanders Field," which he memorized in 10th grade.

"He's a soldier – always has been, always will be," Charlie says. "I've never seen him touch anything he didn't do 110 percent. He'll take it to the max and then some."

Though he's on the road a lot more lately, Oxford remains a pillar at Post 29, where members eagerly supported his campaign for national commander.

"It's an honor for him and an honor for us," says Wayne Mihelich, a retired Navy command master chief and 15-year post member. "He's here to help veterans, and he's very active in our programs for children, from Legion Baseball to the Navy JROTC. He's not one who will say 'I'll help' and never show up. If he says he's going to do something, he'll do it."

Oxford is a big proponent of what he calls the "building blocks" of a strong American Legion: veterans services, troop support, and youth programs such as Boys State, Junior Shooting Sports and Oratorical. "We've got to have the people, though," he says. "They're the concrete holding the blocks together. We need to make sure our membership is growing and not stagnant. We need to renew, reinvigorate, and get that fire in our belly again."

"We should be proud of who we are and what we've become," he says. "It's time, though, to look forward to The American Legion's next 100 years. Everything we do today and everything we do tomorrow builds a foundation for the future." 🌿

*Matt Grills is managing editor of The American Legion Magazine.*



*Bill Oxford shares a laugh with Isiah, 23, the oldest of his four grandsons. Photo by Schelly Stone*

## TOP TEN THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT **BILL OXFORD**

- 10.** According to his wife, Frances, "he's an organized person, in the messiest sort of way."
- 9.** He enjoys woodworking, making shelves, coin racks, food trays and other items in his late stepfather's workshop.
- 8.** He dislikes TV sitcoms, preferring National Geographic, the Military Channel and, truth be told, WWE.
- 7.** His favorite film is "Secondhand Lions," about a boy who spends the summer with his two rich, eccentric uncles on a farm in Texas. "They're two old guys who have lived a good life and don't want to turn loose of it."
- 6.** He and Frances attend Whitnel Pentecostal Holiness Church in Lenoir, where they've been members for nearly 20 years.
- 5.** His son's family roots for the Tar Heels. His daughter's family are Duke fans. "We don't discuss basketball," he says, laughing.
- 4.** His hero growing up was his uncle, William Oxford, a World War II Army radio operator who taught him some Morse code.
- 3.** Had he not joined the military, he might have become an architect.
- 2.** In the car, he listens to the '60s on 6 station on Sirius XM.
- 1.** When family gathers at the Oxfords' home, his signature dish is always on the menu. "He makes a killer prime rib," Frances says.



AMERICA REMEMBERS PRESENTS

# The Vietnam Veterans Tribute Thompson

## HONORING ALL THOSE WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM

Our men and women came from all over the country, from all walks of life, to fight for freedom on the other side of the world. They served with honor, dignity, and courage. All gave some, some gave all, and many are still missing and unaccounted for. As a nation, we owe all of our Vietnam Veterans a debt that can never be repaid.

Nothing about the Vietnam War was easy. Those who were there remember the swampy grasslands, rice paddies, dense jungles, the heat and an elusive enemy; a war that took place halfway around the world in a country divided by decades of bitter history.

Few generations faced a more daunting challenge than those who fought in Southeast Asia. Few generations are more deserving of our gratitude and respect. To honor all those who served in Vietnam, America Remembers presents the **Vietnam Veterans Tribute Thompson**. Craftsmen commissioned specifically for this project by America Remembers decorate each Thompson in elegant 24-karat gold artwork on a mirror-polished nickel-decorated receiver. Issued in an exclusive limited edition of only 1,000 Tributes, this handsome firearm captures the courage and sacrifice of all those who fought for freedom in Vietnam.

The Tribute is a working semi-automatic Thompson submachine gun in caliber .45 ACP, one of the most memorable American infantry weapons of all time. Like many dedicated Americans, the Thompson served proudly in Vietnam. We've taken this combat-tested classic and transformed it into a work of art. The result is a stunning presentation firearm that will stand as a testament and lasting Tribute to all Vietnam veterans.

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We know there will never be another American-made firearm like the Thompson submachine gun.

And there will never be more dedicated men and women than those who bravely served their country in Vietnam.

Much like the generations of warriors who came before, those who served with valor in Vietnam deserve their place in American history.

They didn't hesitate to put their lives on the line and give up everything in defense of our liberty and freedom. Some made the ultimate sacrifice. Others returned home to a divided nation. All of them deserve our gratitude.

During the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vietnam War, there has been a strong interest in firearm Tributes honoring those who served in Vietnam. Demand for this Tribute is expected to be strong. Order now to guarantee your place in the edition. We will arrange delivery through the licensed firearms dealer of your choice (not available in CA, CT, MD, NY). If for any reason you are not completely satisfied with your Tribute, you may return it in original, unfired condition within 30 days for a complete and courteous refund.

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▼ Both sides of the receiver feature emblems that honor Vietnam War veterans. The banner reads: "A Grateful Nation Remembers," and inside the oval is a lone American soldier, the distinctive silhouette of Vietnam and a pair of U.S. military helicopters. The emblem on the right side is framed with a banner reading: "Vietnam Veterans Tribute Thompson".

▼ Left side of the receiver features a soldier with his M60 machine gun--nicknamed "The Pig" for its hefty size. The M60 unleashed a fury of firepower on the enemy. Also featured is a M48-A3 Patton tank providing cover as troops enter a village. The M48 was a workhorse during the Vietnam War.

▲ Right side also features a soldier scanning the distance for enemy movement. A pair of M48 tanks make their way on the ground while the sky is abuzz with helicopters, which played such an important role during the Vietnam War. On the far end of the receiver, you'll find a Marine and his M16. Along with the Huey, the legendary M16 has become a symbol of combat service in Vietnam. Introduced to the battlefield in 1964, the M16 was a lightweight assault rifle that proved invaluable in jungle firefights. Right side features an image of the iconic Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal presented by Republic of Vietnam to members of the United States military who completed at least six months of duty in the war, with a frame reading: "Vietnam War - All Gave Some, Some Gave All." Below it you'll find a banner that reads: "Lest We Forget."

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*Sudanese dockers unload a food shipment organized by USAID and the World Food Programme at Port Sudan on the Red Sea coast. Ashraf Shazly/AFP/Getty Images*

# IN DEFENSE OF FOREIGN AID

*U.S. assistance has built, and sustains, international order.*

BY ALAN W. DOWD

**O**f all the line items in the federal budget, perhaps none is more vilified and less appreciated than foreign aid. It has no well-heeled domestic interest group to defend it, it seldom yields immediate benefits, and it takes finite federal resources away from Americans and diverts them overseas. So it's no surprise that foreign aid has long been a political punching bag.

What may be a surprise is that many military leaders view foreign aid as key to promoting U.S. interests, keeping the peace and preserving some semblance of international order.

**HOPE** We tend to think of foreign aid as a more recent phenomenon – something spawned by the exigencies of the early Cold War years.

Yet concerted efforts to distribute foreign aid by Americans date at least to 1820, when Americans provided aid to support Greek independence and care for Greek orphans. In 1832, when the starving people of the Cape Verde Islands rowed out to a ship hoping to buy food, “they were astonished to learn that the vessel had been sent by the United States for the express purpose of relieving their necessities,” the late Robert Bremner detailed in “American Philanthropy.” During the Irish famine

in the 1840s, the contributions of Massachusetts alone “required two sloops of war, four merchant ships and two steamers.”

During World War I, Americans formed the Commission for Relief in Belgium, which distributed \$1 billion in food and clothing to refugees. After the war, the American Relief Administration distributed food to war-ravaged Europe. When earthquakes devastated Japan in 1923, President Calvin Coolidge dispatched the U.S. Pacific Fleet to deliver relief. In 1943, America helped create the U.N. Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, which distributed \$4 billion in food and medicine to refugees.

After World War II, Secretary of State George Marshall unveiled a \$13 billion aid and relief program to help Europe rebuild. Along with the American fighting man's efforts on the battlefield, the Marshall Plan saved Western civilization.

Halfway around the world, Gen. Douglas MacArthur diverted 800,000 tons of U.S. military supplies to feed Japan. He then persuaded Washington to earmark \$250 million for food and medicine – “an amount exceeding the combined budgets of the U.S. Departments of Commerce, Justice and Labor,” a RAND report observes.



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In 1947, as he urged Congress to send hundreds of millions in aid to Greece and Turkey, President Harry Truman warned, “The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive.”

Truman, Marshall and MacArthur recognized that foreign aid was an essential tool of foreign policy and a textbook example of enlightened self-interest. To prevent “misery ... want ... poverty and strife” from nurturing the seeds of totalitarianism and other threats, Truman sent unprecedented amounts of aid to Europe, rebuilt Japan and Germany, and defeated Stalin’s blockade of West Berlin with an airlift that delivered 2.3 million tons of assistance – the first of 450 U.S. humanitarian airlifts during the Cold War.

**MERCY** During the Cold War, Americans poured \$2 trillion in economic assistance and aid into some of the poorest, hungriest corners of the globe. Many billions more have been added to the ledger since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Yet it’s common to see articles belittling America for being “stingy” or for earmarking “just” \$34.1 billion for official development assistance. Called “ODA,” official development assistance refers to non-military foreign aid programs.

U.S. foreign-aid spending is both more and less than what its critics say it is. Let’s start with the less side of the ledger. Foreign aid amounts to far less than what most Americans think we spend on it. In a 2015 survey, for instance, the average respondent estimated that 26 percent of federal spending went toward assisting other countries. That would equal more than \$1 trillion in foreign aid annually.

Americans actually spend less than 1 percent of the budget on foreign aid annually. But that doesn’t make us stingy, which brings us to the more side of the ledger. Owing to the sheer size of America’s GDP, that fraction of a percent amounts to more ODA than any other nation distributes. A Council on Foreign Relations analysis reveals that the United States sends aid to more than 200 countries – most via the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Between 2003 and 2006, USAID built or rebuilt 2,943 schools in Iraq. USAID has helped build 16,000 schools and train 154,000 teachers in Afghanistan, enabling 9.2 million Afghan kids to attend school – up from 900,000 in 2002. Thirty-

nine percent of those kids are girls – up from zero percent in 2002.

USAID reports that its programs “helped to vaccinate 500 million children and save 7 million lives since 2001.” In the past decade, it delivered safe drinking water, sanitation and sustainable agriculture to more than 15 million people.

Yet there’s much more. As the *Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances* details, “Government aid is no longer the primary measure of a country’s generosity. U.S. private philanthropy, remittances from migrants living in the United States to their home countries and private capital flows each exceed U.S. ODA.” That \$34.1 billion figure doesn’t capture charitable giving overseas (\$43.9 billion), money transfers from immigrants back to their birthplaces (\$108.7 billion) and private investment (\$179.3 billion). Added up, a far larger picture of U.S. overseas aid emerges: \$366 billion annually.

Even that figure is incomplete. Consider the uncounted billions America spends deploying military assets – troops trained to rescue, repair and rebuild; ships with desalination equipment and triage centers; transport helicopters and cargo planes that deliver supplies and evacuate victims – to respond to disasters in Kosovo and Kurdistan, Sinjar and Somalia, Bosnia and Bangladesh, West Berlin and East Timor. The list – like the needs of the world’s suffering – is endless.

A recent example of this hidden aid is America’s response to the 2014 Ebola outbreak. U.S. Africa Command stood up a base of operations in Liberia to coordinate the efforts of NGOs and government agencies. The 101st Airborne and other Army units provided security and logistics solutions, Navy Seabees erected treatment facilities, Air Force planes transported thousands of tons of people and cargo, and Marines provided enabling assistance in Senegal. No other nation could have carried out such a feat, and no nation was billed for what America’s military did.

Other examples of U.S. foreign-aid dollars at work are the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI), both launched by President George W. Bush.

In 2003, 30 million Africans suffered with AIDS/HIV, including 3 million children. Yet only 50,000 Africans were receiving needed treatment. In response, Bush proposed “a work of mercy beyond all current international efforts to help the people of Africa.” Today, PEPFAR supports life-saving treatment for 11.5 million people, has prevented 2 million infants from being born with HIV, and provides critical care for 6.2 million orphans.





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Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Disease, says PEPFAR has saved up to 15 million lives thus far.

Launched in 2005, PMI helps protect 30 million people from Africa's deadliest killer – mosquitoes – by distributing bed nets and medicine. Thanks to PMI, 7 million malaria deaths have been averted, malaria mortality is down by 54 percent, and there has been a 30 percent decline in malaria cases. This is not the handiwork of a stingy nation.

**PEACE** These foreign aid programs are not just “works of mercy,” to borrow Bush’s phrase. They serve U.S. interests.

Vin Gupta, an officer in the Air Force Medical Corps and professor at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, and Vanessa Kerry of the Harvard Medical School found that between 2005 and 2014, countries that received the highest levels of per-capita health aid “enjoyed near-immediate results in terms of improved state-stability metrics, including higher quality of governance, lower degrees of corruption, enhanced social cohesion, and a more vibrant civil society.” Health-related development aid, they conclude, “not only saves lives but also appears to facilitate the rise of more peaceful societies.”

More peaceful societies are more stable, and peace and stability are in the national interest. In this way, effective foreign aid programs “can serve both strategic and humanitarian purposes,” Gupta and Kerry conclude.

Indeed, helping nations in need often serves America’s most vital interests, while burnishing America’s highest ideals.

The Marshall Plan prevented western Europe from sliding into the prison yard of communism, created a market for U.S. goods and services, and transformed Europe from an incubator of world wars into a partnership of peace and prosperity.

The Berlin Airlift saved 2 million people from starvation, rescued a city from tyranny, and highlighted the stark differences between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Those 450 Cold War-era airlifts ensured that foreign governments would “be receptive to Americans politically, economically and militarily,” an Air Force analysis explains.

America’s response to the Ebola outbreak saved thousands in western Africa, prevented the killer virus from spreading into Europe and the Americas, and staved off a global panic.

Real schools with textbooks and teachers are an antidote to lies spewed by extremist madrassas.

Likewise, providing medicine and clean water to forgotten corners of Africa serves as an inoculation against jihadism. “Societies mired in disease breed hopelessness and despair,” Bush recently observed, in an echo of Truman, “leaving people ripe for recruitment by extremists.”

**HELP** Yet recent decades have seen a downward trend in U.S. foreign-aid spending. Measured in constant dollars as a share of GDP, non-military aid is lower today than it was a decade ago – and far below the ’50s. But the end of the Cold War didn’t end misery, want, poverty and strife – to use Truman’s words – or the threats to U.S. interests they so often spawn.

President Dwight Eisenhower, the no-nonsense general, saw a connection between foreign aid and U.S. interests. Defending a massive aid program that enfolded security assistance, economic development and global health, Eisenhower called foreign aid “an investment in our present safety, in our future strength and in the growth of freedom throughout the world.”

Fast-forward to the 21st century, and today’s military leaders are making the same argument.

In 2013, responding to a question about State Department foreign-aid programs, then-Gen. James Mattis warned a Senate committee, “If you don’t fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition.”

A group of 121 retired generals and admirals recently signed an open letter arguing that USAID and other development programs “are critical to preventing conflict and reducing the need to put our men and women in uniform in harm’s way.”

Two signatories of that letter, Adm. James Stavridis and Gen. Anthony Zinni, add that foreign aid “is not a reward for good behavior. It is a critical tool to advance American interests around the world and address the drivers of conflict and instability.”

The generals and admirals know something that few Americans consider: the world America began building after World War II – a world in which free government, free markets, free trade and free nations can thrive – didn’t emerge by accident and doesn’t endure by magic. It depends on those blessed to live in relative peace and prosperity using their wealth to deter aggression, to enforce international norms of behavior and, yes, to offer help and hope to those in need. 🍀

*Alan W. Dowd is a senior fellow with the Sagamore Institute Center for America’s Purpose.*





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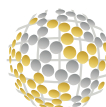
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*Idaho Falls Post 56 celebrates following the final out of its victory over Fargo, N.D., Post 2 in the American Legion World Series championship game Aug. 21 at Veterans Field at Keeter Stadium in Shelby, N.C. Photo by Ryan Young*

## LEGION BASEBALL

# Idaho wins its first ALWS title

A record-setting year for Idaho Falls, Idaho, Post 56 ended in a perfect way, as the Bandits won the American Legion World Series Aug. 21 with a 5-3 victory over Fargo, N.D., Post 2.

This is the first American Legion World Series win for a team from the state of Idaho.

When the championship game started Aug. 20, Fargo made it 2-0 in the first inning, then Idaho Falls scored once. Three pitches into the top of the second inning rain came, forcing a suspension until the next morning.

When play resumed, Idaho Falls scored three runs in the second inning and one in the third. Fargo scored again in the seventh inning, but it wasn't enough.

"It's unbelievable," said Idaho Falls player Bruer Webster. "We did it for our state. I love where I live. I love the state of Idaho. It means a lot to bring the title back.

"(The last play) was in slow motion," he continued. "You kind of black out when you field it before you make the throw. It was crazy."

Idaho Falls relief pitcher Andrew Gregersen finished with six innings, five hits allowed and just one run, striking out six.

"I honestly was surprised to hear that I was the one going out to pitch, but I knew everyone would have my back behind me," he said.

This marked the third straight year Idaho sent a team to the Legion World Series, and the ninth overall. Only two of the other eight programs made the title game: Pocatello lost 23-6 in the first World Series against Yonkers, N.Y., in Philadelphia in 1926, and Lewiston Post 13 dropped a 5-2 decision to Brooklawn, N.J., in Yakima, Wash., in 2001.

Idaho Falls ended the season 61-6. Fargo, the first North Dakota team to play for a national title, finished 54-8.

"It's unbelievable," said Idaho Falls player Randon Hostert. "Making history with this group of guys is just amazing. I couldn't ask for a better team."

Idaho Falls manager Ryan Alexander said it was quite a season for the young players. "They have earned everything they have gotten along the way. It is a resilient group. Our goal was to be in Shelby, and once we got here we decided we might as well win it. These boys have continued to impress. They are a good group of young men I couldn't be happier for.

He continued, "This shows that there is good baseball in Idaho. There has been for a long time. There are great high school programs and American Legion programs. Coaches work hard, players love the game, and we are just happy to be here representing our home state, the Northwest Region and Post 56."

— Jeremy Field



## AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL POSTSEASON AWARDS

### American Legion Baseball Big Stick Award

Trevor Marsh, Randolph County Post 45, N.C.  
(26 total bases)

### American Legion Baseball Slugger Award

Ron Franklin, Destrehan Post 366, La.  
(.600 batting average)

### Dr. Irvin L. "Click" Cowger RBI

Memorial Award Ron Franklin (15 RBIs)

**Bob Feller Pitching Award** Randon Hostert,  
Idaho Falls Post 56, Idaho (23 strikeouts)

### James Daniels Sportsmanship Award

Alex Cortez, Idaho Falls Post 56, Idaho

**George W. Rulon American Legion Player  
of the Year Award** Trevor Marsh



Colton Frey of Fargo, N.D.,  
Post 2 pitches during the  
ALWS championship  
game. Photo by Ryan Young



TOP LEFT: Danville, Ill., Post 210's  
Ernest Plummer steals second while  
Destrehan, La., Post 366's Gavin  
Freeman attempts to tag him during  
Game 1 on Aug. 15. Photo by Ryan Young



TOP RIGHT: Bruer Webster of Idaho  
Falls Post 56 throws to first base in  
the first inning of Game 7 against  
Shrewsbury, Mass., Post 397.

Photo by Ryan Young



MIDDLE: Festus, Mo., Post 253's  
J.B. Bridges runs to first base during  
Game 6 against Destrehan, La.,  
Post 366 on Aug. 16. Photo by Ryan Young

BOTTOM LEFT: Andrew Gregersen of  
Idaho Falls Post 56 slides safely into  
second base as Ernest Plummer of  
Danville, Ill., Post 210 attempts to tag  
him out in extra innings during  
Game 14 on Aug. 19. Photo by Ryan Young

BOTTOM RIGHT: Fargo, N.D., Post 2  
celebrates after its win in Game 13  
on Aug. 19. Photo by Chet Strange



See more photos and video  
online: [legion.org/baseball](http://legion.org/baseball)



Official White House photo by Tia Dufour

## MEMBERSHIP

## What to know about the LEGION Act

On July 30, President Trump signed a bill declaring that the United States has been in a state of war since Dec. 7, 1941. The American Legion sought the declaration to honor approximately 1,600 U.S. servicemembers killed or wounded in previously undeclared periods of war.

The LEGION (Let Everyone Get Involved In Opportunities for National Service) Act opens the door for up to 4.2 million veterans to access American Legion programs and benefits for which they previously had not been eligible. Here are some things to know:

▪ **What does this mean for veterans who previously were not eligible to join The American Legion?** Veterans who were honorably discharged but whose service did not fall under the previous defined war eras may now join The American Legion immediately. Eligible members may sign up at [legion.org/join](https://legion.org/join).

▪ **How does this differentiate The American Legion from AMVETS?** The American Legion's eligibility criteria states that veterans must have served during wartime. When Congress decides the United States is no longer in a state of war, the Legion's membership eligibility period will close, while AMVETS will still be open to those who served.

▪ **How does this affect the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion?** Auxiliary membership is open to grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of eligible veterans. SAL eligibility criteria changes along with that of the Legion. Any son or grandson of a living American Legion member may join the SAL. Sons and grandsons of deceased veterans also are eligible.

▪ **Who can I contact for more information about this change as it applies to membership and recruiting?** Contact the national Membership Division. To find the representative in your state, visit [legion.org/membership/contactus](https://legion.org/membership/contactus).

## 'WE TRAINED FOR WAR'

When President Trump signed the LEGION Act into law, it ushered in a new era for The American Legion. The LEGION Act, formally titled "Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service," recognizes all veterans since World War II as "wartime veterans" and consequently extends American Legion membership to all who served during previously undeclared periods of war.

Eric Bartlett of Plymouth, Mich., has waited more than 30 years to be eligible to join The American Legion, and was the first to join under the LEGION Act.

"I'm proud that the U.S. government now recognizes that the years I served in the Marine Corps were wartime service," Bartlett says. "We trained for war and were always ready for war. There were many times we were ready to go at a moment's notice."

Bartlett served from 1985 to 1989, between the Lebanon/Grenada era, which ended in July 1984, and the Panama era, which began in December 1989. An infantry rifleman for more than three years, he served with the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines, 2nd Marine Division, and earned the MOS of Marine scout sniper.

Already an SAL member, Bartlett plans to join Post 32 in Livonia, Mich., his stepfather's post, along with his son, Will, a Marine with 3/6 India Company, 2nd Marine Division.

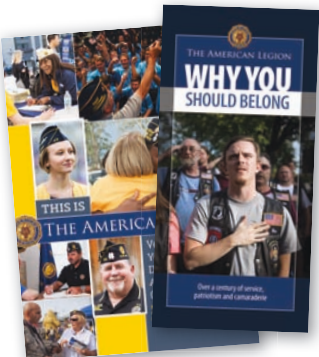
Bartlett is a professional fitness trainer and a former No. 3-ranked competitor in the Senior World CrossFit games. He's also the brother of Kevin Bartlett, the Legion's national judge advocate.

"I feel very honored that I now qualify for The American Legion," Bartlett says. "I look forward to helping it grow because of all the work it does for our veterans."

*Marine Corps veteran Eric Bartlett, right, is now eligible for American Legion membership, along with his son, Will.*

## UPDATED MEMBERSHIP MATERIALS

Print and digital promotional materials are being updated by American Legion National Headquarters. Download membership brochures, officer manuals, scholarship applications and more at [legion.org/publications](https://legion.org/publications). New materials ordered from posts, districts and departments will include inserts to reflect the changes in membership eligibility.





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—John F. Kennedy

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the all-American design is an embroidered banner that reads, "U.S. VETERAN." Fully embroidered in golden thread on the front are the words, "DUTY, HONOR, COUNTRY". Custom details include a comfortable brushed fleece interior, a grey thermal knit lined hood, kangaroo front pockets, knit cuffs and hem, a full front zipper, and silver-toned metal tippets on the hood drawstrings. Imported.

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## HONOR &amp; REMEMBRANCE

## Centennial post reclaims veterans center

In 1942, Los Animas County took possession of Fort Wootton Memorial Square, a seven-building facility in Trinidad, Colo., originally dedicated to veterans.

"After World War II broke out, the county just took everything over and evicted the veterans groups," says David Walker, commander of American Legion Post 11 in Trinidad. "In 1937, the county agreed to a 50-year lease, and each of the veterans organizations were supposed to pay \$1 a year for the lease period. The county was supposed to furnish electricity, water, plumbing, maintenance, a caretaker for the property, trash hauling, snow removal. They were supposed to do everything, plus the maintenance of all the individual buildings. They didn't do any of that."

Instead, the county used the complex to house the Department of Human Services and later the Sheriff's Department. It wasn't until Walker and others started working with city and county officials in 2009 that there was any movement to return the facility to veterans groups.

Negotiators had to overcome numerous obstacles, including major repair of an elevator. Finally, in 2017, the building was returned to veterans groups – primarily Post 11, since it is the only active veterans service organization in Trinidad. Technically, the Las Animas County Veterans Council owns the property.

"It's exciting to finally have a post home," said Walker, noting the post celebrated its centennial June 27. "We've got a lot of good ideas about what we're going to do with the property here. I would like to see it come back to what it was originally intended to be: a center for community activities in Trinidad and the county, recognizing veterans in the process. Having a place where veterans could be involved and feel they can come for assistance is something we're working on."

Post 11 has already resumed using the facility to honor veterans. On April 13, it conducted a memorial for Air Force veteran Bernard Phillips, 75, who had no family living nearby. Peterson Air Force Base provided a color guard.

Called the "fortress of memory," Fort Wootton Memorial Square was dedicated to all U.S. veterans in 1937. Denver Mayor B.F. Stapleton and Colorado Gov. Teller Ammons, both members of The American Legion, were in attendance.

Irwin Rogers, a Navy veteran and past commander of the Trinidad American Legion post, is credited with the vision for Fort Wootton. Connected by a 9-foot rock wall, the buildings take up a city block, and surround a spacious courtyard. Once used for weddings, Boy Scout meetings, boxing matches and other events, Holloway Auditorium is the largest building on campus. Now the post can use it to host events for several hundred people.

"This is going to be a great destination place for community residents, for our tourism, but most importantly other veterans," County Commissioner Luis Lopez said.

Now that the Veterans Council runs the building, it must fund its upkeep, pay utilities and more. The city provided a \$25,000 grant, and the council is working with the Colorado State Historic Fund on a historic structure assessment. Walker sees a 10- to 20-year project costing up to \$2 million to get the facility to meet his vision.

Lopez, grandson of a World War II veteran, is among the county commissioners who approved the transfer.

"I made a promise to the Veterans Council that within my first term we would see this to fruition," he says. "We did it within two years. I'm proud of that. There was a lot of animosity over the years, but whatever happened in the 1940s had nothing to do with what happens now."

– Henry Howard





## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

# World's eyes on Hong Kong

Hong Kong, the semi-autonomous territory ruled by Great Britain for 156 years, has been paralyzed by protests throughout 2019.

The unrest began when a bill was introduced in Hong Kong's pro-People's Republic of China (PRC) legislative body that would allow the extradition of Hong Kong residents accused of crimes to mainland China. Even after Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam withdrew the bill, protesters stayed in the streets calling for political reforms.

The BBC estimates the protest movement has swelled into the millions, with some protesters waving the U.S. flag, British flag and the flag of Hong Kong under British rule – and most demonstrating under banners that read “Hong Kong Is Not China.”

As the *Strait Times* reports, the movement demands “amnesty for all arrested protesters, an independent inquiry into alleged police brutality, universal suffrage for the Chief Executive and Legislative Council elections, (and) resignation of Mrs. Lam, whom some accuse of being a puppet of Beijing.”

The protests have been largely peaceful, though some have turned violent. Homemade bombs have been hurled at police stations, and protesters clashed with security forces at the Hong Kong International Airport. They blame police for starting the violence, pointing to an incident when a female demonstrator sustained a grievous eye injury at the hands of police.



Wikimedia Commons

The PRC's office in Hong Kong has labeled the protesters' actions as “serious violent crimes” and “behavior that is close to terrorism.” According to the BBC, “Repeated use of such language suggests that China is losing patience with the protesters, and could increase the likelihood of an intervention from Beijing.”

By late August, the PRC began underlining its words with actions.

As France24 reports, satellite images show PRC troops and armored personnel carriers massing in Shenzhen, just across the bay from Hong Kong. In addition, the PRC maintains a garrison of some 10,000 troops in Hong Kong.

Noting how the American people “remember Tiananmen Square,” National Security Advisor John Bolton has warned Beijing that the mood in Congress is “very volatile at this point, and a misstep by the Chinese government, I think, would cause an explosion on Capitol Hill.”

Indeed, Sen. Cory Gardner, R-Colo., who chairs a subcommittee on East Asia, has urged the White House to “make clear to Beijing that any crackdown in Hong Kong will have profound consequences for China, including imposition of U.S. sanctions. The voice of the people of Hong Kong must be heard without fear of repression and retaliation ... The world is watching.”

President Trump has urged the PRC to “deal humanely with Hong Kong,” conceding that “some governments don't want democracy.”

– Alan W. Dowd



New York National Guard

## MILITARY AFFAIRS

## Twin sisters retire from service

“Twin sisters who began their Army National Guard careers together, went to war in Afghanistan together and share a house together, are now planning their retirements from the New York Army National Guard together,” the Defense Visual Information

Distribution Service (DVIDS) reports.

Master Sgt. Lisa Currier and Lt. Col. Lynn Currier, both of Troy, N.Y., entered the service in 1986. “We got out of college back in 1986, and were in Burlington, Vt., working and we had to pay bills and student loans,” Lisa recalls. She saw a newspaper ad for the Vermont Army National Guard, told her sister about it, and the two enlisted together in the Army Reserve in February 1986.

The sisters went through basic training and advanced individual training together, were posted at Camp Johnson together, and in 2008 deployed to Afghanistan together with the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, though Lisa notes that the Army “separated us after three or four months.”

“If I had the same chance again, I'd do the 34 years again,” she says.

## BY THE NUMBERS

## Global nuclear warhead tally

**6,500** Russia

**6,185** United States

**300** France

**290** China

**200** Britain

**160** Pakistan

**140** India

**90** Israel

**20 to 30** North Korea

Sources: Defense News, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute



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Precision champion Makenzie Sheffield, second from left, and Sporter champion Jaden-Ann Fraser are congratulated by National Commander Brett Reistad, American Legion Auxiliary Vice President Nicole Clapp and Sons of The American Legion National Commander Greg "Doc" Gibbs. Photo by Ken Knight

#### YOUTH

## Texas, Tennessee youth named Legion air rifle champions

The American Legion's 29th Annual Junior 3-Position Air Rifle Championship named its precision and sporter champions July 27, following the final round of 10-shots in standing position inside the USA Shooting range at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Precision champion Makenzie Sheffield of Granbury, Texas, moved from second position to first after the seventh shot, while Sporter champion Jaden-Ann Fraser of Church Hill, Tenn., held on to her lead position heading into the competition's final round.

Tears in her eyes, Sheffield walked off the line with a standing final score of 103.2 and embraced her mother.

"It's my last high school match," said Sheffield, who will be shooting for North Carolina State University this fall. "You work so hard for it, family is behind you, coaches. I'm just grateful for everyone who's helped me to get here."

When Fraser put down her air rifle gun following the top eight sporter finalists' 10 shots, she sighed with relief. Shortly afterward, she learned she'd won with a standing final score of 86.9.

"I'm very happy right now," Fraser said. "This has to be the most amazing competition I've been to, and probably my best rifle experience so far."

Sheffield and Fraser each received a \$5,000 scholarship provided by the Legion and Sons of The American Legion. They also attended the Legion's 101st National Convention in Indianapolis in late August along with other American Legion youth program champions.

– Cameran Richardson

The top five competitors in each category, along with their standing final scores and overall aggregate scores:

#### PRECISION

**1. Makenzie Sheffield**, Granbury, Texas, 103.2/2,476.2

**2. Scott Rockett**, Cary, N.C., 100.4/2,474

**3. Gavin Barnick**, Mora, Minn., 101.4/2,472.4

**4. Nina Schuett**, Billings, Mont., 99.4/2,468.4

**5. Grace Taschuk**, Andover, Minn., 101.1/2,468.1

#### SPORTER

**1. Jaden-Ann Fraser**, Church Hill, Tenn., 86.9/2,336.9

**2. Kayla Kalenza**, Fort Mill, S.C. – 87.5/2,333.5

**3. Olivia Cattrell**, Church Hill, Tenn., 84.5/2,320.5

**4. Sarah Leininger**, Fort Mill, S.C., 80.1/2,305.1

**5. Kevin Nguyen**, Des Moines, Iowa, 93.3/2,301.3



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The Apollo 11 Saturn V space vehicle lifts off from Kennedy Space Center on July 16, 1969.

Wikimedia Commons

## SCIENCE

### Overdue correction

On Jan. 13, 1920, an editorial-page feature in *The New York Times* “dismissed the notion that a rocket could function in a vacuum.” Mocking the theories of rocket pioneer Robert Goddard, the *Times* editorial concluded “that Professor Goddard, with his ‘chair’ in Clark College and the countenancing of the Smithsonian Institution, does not know the relation of action to reaction, and of the need to have something better than a vacuum against which to react ... he only seems to lack the knowledge ladled out daily in high schools.”

On July 17, 1969, as Apollo 11 rocketed toward the moon, the *Times* ran a correction, wryly conceding that “a rocket can function in a vacuum as well as in an atmosphere. The *Times* regrets the error.”

## MEMORIAM

### Another 9/11 victim identified

In a sobering reminder of 9/11's legacy, New York City medical examiners have identified the remains of another person killed at the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001. As *Time* reports, “The victim's name, which is being withheld, was confirmed through DNA testing of remains recovered in 2013.” This marks the 1,643rd person identified since the attacks. The medical examiner reports that around 40 percent of the 2,753 people reported missing as a result of the 9/11 attacks remain unidentified.

## MEDIA

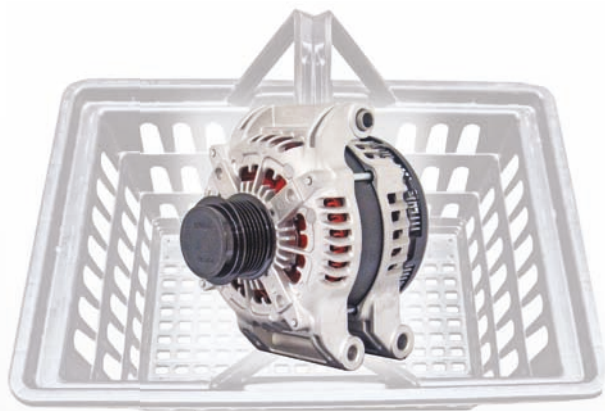
### Going, going, gone?

**2,100** U.S. newspapers shut down since 2004

**1,449** Counties in the United States with only one newspaper (about half the nation's counties)

**171** Counties that do not have a newspaper

Sources: Penny Abernathy (University of North Carolina), 24/7 Wall Street



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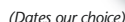
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American Legion Boys Nation delegates visit with Vice President Mike Pence in Washington, D.C., on July 24. Photo by Duane Mercier

## YOUTH

# Boys Nation senators elect officers, meet vice president

For 100 young men representing their states – including two from the District of Columbia – a highlight of this year's American Legion Boys Nation was the opportunity to meet Vice President Mike Pence.

"It wasn't a political talk," said Alabama's Colby Lewis. "It felt kind of like a father figure telling us information, like a teacher or professor ... giving us advice. It was a very cool experience, and I don't think I would have ever got to do it if it wasn't for Boys Nation and The American Legion."

The event set the stage for "Hill Day" on July 25, when Boys Nation senators visited the U.S. Capitol and spoke to their congressional representatives and staffers.

"It's important for us to meet them so that our voices can be heard, and to share with them our pieces of legislation we brought up during Boys Nation," said South Carolina's Travis Johnson. "At the end of the day, a lot of us have a passion and a deep desire to enter politics and government, and if we truly want to be successful, we must meet with those already there and learn from them."

Earlier in the week, the young men elected Senate officials before participating in a presidential debate and election. Lou Acevedo of Gardner, Mass., was elected Boys Nation president. Thomas Penley of Helena, Mont. was elected vice president.

The Boys Nation Senate passed 61 resolutions, believed to be a record.

When not in session, the senators visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Tomb of the Unknowns, the two Jima memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and other sites. They also joined Girls Nation senators at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall for a performance of "Twilight Tattoo," a re-enactment that showcases the history of the U.S. Army.

Speakers at this year's Boys Nation included David Azerrad, director of the Heritage Foundation's B. Kenneth Simon Center for Principles and Politics, who discussed the Constitution with the senators; FBI agent and Kentucky Boys State alum David Scott, who talked about terrorism, online radicalization, counterintelligence and other threats, as well as FBI careers; and Americanism Commission Chairman Richard Anderson, who spoke about the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion.

Acevedo's predecessors as Boys Nation president, Josh Cheadle (2018) and Darius Thomas (2017), served as junior counselors for this year's session, the first time past Boys Nation officers have returned in that role.

– Andy Proffett

## AWARDS

# Legion recognizes academy graduates

This spring, The American Legion's five national vice commanders presented awards to exceptional students at the five service academies.



**Ens. Francis Kim Houston**

Kim received the American Legion award for the highest marks in English, history and government at the Naval Academy. National Vice

Commander Steve Sweet presented the award.



**2nd Lt. Kyle Leland Clarkston, Mich.**

Leland received the American Legion award for the highest proficiency in all academic subjects at the

Air Force Academy. National Vice Commander James E. Wallace presented the award.



**Ens. Brendan McKeever Middletown, N.J.**

McKeever received the American Legion award for national security at the Merchant Marine Academy.

National Vice Commander Jack Milburn presented the award.



**Ens. Helen Oh Walnut, Calif.**

Oh received the American Legion award for athletics at the Coast Guard Academy. National Vice Commander Jim Pisa presented the award.



**2nd Lt. Jesse Palmer Plano, Texas**

Palmer received the American Legion award for the highest standing in chemistry at the Military Academy.

National Vice Commander Paul Spedaliere presented the award.



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## CAREERS



## Why thank-you letters really do work

Too many job seekers think that sending a thank-you letter after a job interview is no longer necessary. They're wrong.

Why would you ever pass up an opportunity to showcase your skills and achievements once again?

Sending a brief, well-written thank-you letter (an email) will almost always give you a competitive advantage over those who don't put forth the effort. In a 2018 survey, CareerBuilder reported that 57 percent of job seekers do not send thank-you letters. Another survey (2017, by Accountemps), found that only 24 percent of HR managers receive thank-you notes.

What's more, they're easy to write if you understand that you're really writing a marketing email crafted to sell you into that position. It's not enough to just say "thanks." Rather, remind recruiters and hiring managers why you're a good fit for the job.

Here's how:

- **Reiterate a few of your qualifications most relevant to that particular position.** That might include work experience highlights, educational credentials, security clearances, technology skills, awards or anything else that makes you a good hire.

- **Share information, projects and achievements you didn't mention during the interview.**

Whether it's a 15-minute phone screening or a two-hour, in-person interview, you'll learn more about the company and the position, so you can share additional details about your career.

- **Demonstrate that you're already "on the job" and listening to the company's needs.** Do this by sharing an idea or solution to a specific problem the company is facing. Let them know you're already thinking about what you can do for them and how.

- **Overcome an objection.** Suppose someone is concerned about your focus on munitions (doesn't relate to their product) or appreciate the depth of your leadership (managing 25 soldiers in combat operations). Here's a great opportunity to make them understand, by translating to civilian language and drawing parallels from your experience to their needs.

Thank-you notes are another way to stand out and be "the one." Take advantage of the opportunity.

Wendy Enelow is co-author of "Modernize Your Résumé: Get Noticed ... Get Hired" and "Expert Résumés for Military-to-Civilian Transitions."



Photo courtesy Post 475

## CENTENNIAL

## Post 475, Dellroy, Ohio

Thanks to the Carroll County Historical Society, American Legion Post 475 in Dellroy, Ohio, has a rare photo of several of its charter members preparing to march in a local parade, circa 1920. In September that year, the post received its initial charter. According to Post Adjutant Brad Gray, Post 475 also has several individual photos of charter members, which may help in identifying those in the group shot.

## SHARE YOUR POST'S LEGACY

Upload stories, photos and videos of your American Legion post's history.

 [legion.org/centennial](http://legion.org/centennial)

## EDUCATION

## GI Bill benefits spanning war eras



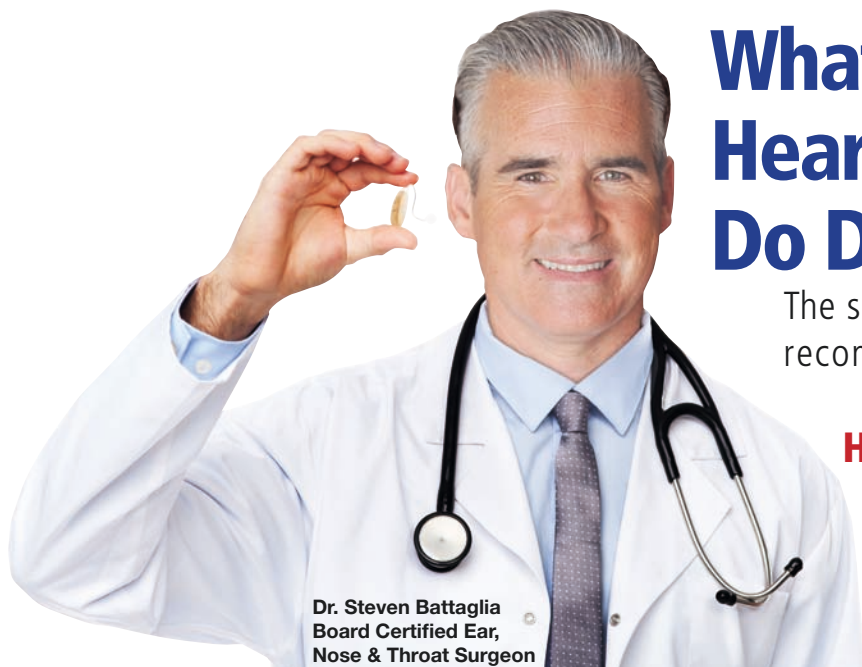
**Q:** *I served in the Marine Corps from 1954 to 1957 and 1958 to 1961, and qualify for the Korean and Vietnam GI Bills. I used my GI Bill for a year of college and received my flight certificates. I also served in the Selected Reserve (Air Force and Army) from 1961 to 1964 and 1970 to 1997, for a total of six years active duty and 30 years reserve.*

*Where do I find information for my reserve time and if I qualify for GI Bill benefits? I have a university degree, but heard the GI Bill cannot be used for a master's degree.*

**A:** To receive Chapter 1606 Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve benefits after discharge, you must have been separated because of a disability, your unit was deactivated between Oct. 1, 2007, and Sept. 30, 2014, or you were involuntarily separated during that same period. You can use your GI Bill for a master's degree. For information on what you may qualify for, visit [ebenefits.va.gov](http://ebenefits.va.gov).

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Apache Junction, Ariz. [askvalerie@legion.org](mailto:askvalerie@legion.org)





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## PERSONAL FINANCE



## Frightening facts about Americans' personal finances

## FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

It's October, and I can't help but smile thinking about some scary trick-or-treat moments from my youth. What lurked around the corner? More candy, or a pack of middle-school bullies hooting and hollering with shaving cream (destined for my face) in hand?

I don't know if I've ever again reached the speed I achieved that

Halloween night. Fear can be a powerful motivator. In the spirit of the season, I'll share a roundup of five scary personal finance statistics that may startle you into a course correction of your own.

▪ **Consumer debt in the United States is greater than \$14 trillion.** If you are like me, your memory of the Great Recession and its across-the-board effect on our economy still sends shivers down your spine. Earlier this year, consumer debt surpassed the accumulated debt Americans carried back in 2008. I don't have a crystal ball, but here's to hoping all that debt doesn't trigger another slide. Let a little fear inspire you to map out a path to a debt-free future. And don't be scared to get help. A credit counselor affiliated with the National Foundation for Credit Counseling ([nfcc.org](http://nfcc.org)) could provide you with the edge you need to get to a better place.

▪ **More than 80 percent of Americans have this retirement plan: keep working.** When the Employee Benefit Research Institute surveyed retirees and workers during 2019's annual Retirement Confidence Survey, it disclosed a shocking disconnect: 34 percent of workers planned to work beyond 70, but only 6 percent of retirees

actually did. Don't base your retirement plan on false assumptions, or use those assumptions to justify avoiding the heavy lifting – saving, investing and planning – to prepare you for retirement.

▪ **Sixty percent of millennials experience financial infidelity.** That's according to a 2017 survey from the financial wellness resource CentSai. In other words, they experience things like lying or being lied to about spending, hiding accounts or outright stealing. Obviously, that type of behavior is flat wrong, but on a more functional level, when was the last time you had a frank financial chat with your significant other? Now's the time. I always say money is a team game. You can't be in the game if you don't know what's going on. And you should, of course, be a good teammate.

▪ **Only 25 percent of Americans have a written financial plan.** As a financial planner, I find this element of the report (issued as part of Schwab's 2019 Modern Wealth Index) particularly frightening. I understand that not everyone needs a formal written plan, but the same report indicated that fewer than half of respondents had specific financial goals. You don't need to be a financial planner – or a rocket scientist – to realize that's off-base. Map out your goals, and build your plan today.

This year, instead of running for the hills like I did when confronted with a scary situation, tackle your financial challenges head-on.

*J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.*

[legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances](http://legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances)

## TRENDS

## Shopping under the influence

The numbers are in, and Americans spent \$39.4 billion last year on what's described as "drunk shopping" – the practice of making a purchase while intoxicated. As *Fortune* reports, drunk shopping is a booming industry/trend, with a \$9 billion increase in 2018 over the previous year.

More than a quarter of Americans surveyed – 26 percent – report "making a purchase while they're tipsy (or worse)." That equals 53.4 million intoxicated shoppers. The survey reveals that men spend more than women while shopping under the influence, and millennials spend more than baby boomers or Generation X.

## VERBATIM

At 82 degrees at night, you're just turning into jerky.

Twitter user @charles\_bellows, responding to a recommendations by Energy Star – a Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency program – to keep homes at 78 degrees at minimum for energy efficiency. The report also

suggested homes be kept at 85 degrees when residents aren't at home and 82 while sleeping.





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### How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail [reunions@legion.org](mailto:reunions@legion.org) or submit information via our website, [www.legion.org/reunions](http://www.legion.org/reunions).

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

### Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail [reunions@legion.org](mailto:reunions@legion.org).

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

### ARMY

**22nd Surg Hosp MUST Unit (Phu Bai, Vietnam, 1969)**, Memphis, TN, 5/14-17, Terry Caskey, (828) 464-2610, [seacruise@charter.net](mailto:seacruise@charter.net); **55th Co OC 29-69 Inf OCS**, Columbia, SC, 12/13-15, Wendel "Toby" Chaffin, (803) 237-3369, [tobychaffin.pb@gmail.com](mailto:tobychaffin.pb@gmail.com); **187th Assault Heli Co (Blackhawks, Crusaders, RatPack)**, Austin, TX, 11/10-14, Jim Henry, (703) 319-1211, [jim951@gmail.com](mailto:jim951@gmail.com); **197th Inf Bde (Mech) (Separated)**, Fort Mitchell, AL, 7/24-26, Jean Green, (229) 325-6066, [pauljeangreen@yahoo.com](mailto:pauljeangreen@yahoo.com); **516th Eng Co (Hanau, Germany)**, Branson, MO, 10/7-11, Raymond Pursley, (417) 253-4676, [cpursley67@gmail.com](mailto:cpursley67@gmail.com); **D Trp 1/1 Cav, Americal Div**, Port Canaveral, FL (Cruise), 4/20-24, Gary Smith, (419) 706-1277, [gsmith1158@yahoo.com](mailto:gsmith1158@yahoo.com); **E-6-1 Evil**

**Echo**, Potomac, MD, 11/10, Mike Cowfer, (301) 313-9196, [roadster3232@yahoo.com](mailto:roadster3232@yahoo.com); **Inf OCS 1-70 (Fort Benning, GA)**, Columbus, GA, 1/16-19, Jim Lange, (404) 630-6748, [james.lange130@gmail.com](mailto:james.lange130@gmail.com)

### COAST GUARD

**ECCG Aviation Old Timers Assn**, Elizabeth City, NC, 10/11-12, Ron Wiborg, (252) 264-3073, [wideload@centurylink.net](mailto:wideload@centurylink.net)

### JOINT

**Assn of 3rd Armd Div Vets**, New Orleans, 11/7-10, Larry Klausner, (847) 421-9585, [larrymgdlite@gmail.com](mailto:larrymgdlite@gmail.com); **HAWKER (Including Army Msl Air Def & Mar HAWK Vets)**, Charleston, SC, 10/13-17, Pam

Brown, (417) 338-4048, [info@gatheringsplus.com](mailto:info@gatheringsplus.com)

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**Alpha Btry 1st Bn 12th Mar 3rd Mar Div (Vietnam, 1965-1969)**, Savannah/Tybee Island, GA, 11/3-6, Charlie Jensen, (770) 329-8585, [cjensen@bellsouth.net](mailto:cjensen@bellsouth.net); **I Co 3-7 (All Eras)**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 4/22-25, Dennis Deibert, (717) 652-1695, [dennisdeibert8901@comcast.net](mailto:dennisdeibert8901@comcast.net); **Mar Officers Basic Class 6-67**, Pensacola Beach, FL, 10/24-27, Jan Hruska, (850) 816-9624, [jan.hruska@gmail.com](mailto:jan.hruska@gmail.com)

### NAVY

**Anchorage LSD 36**, San Diego, 10/9-11, Michael McGrath, (619) 750-6390, [lsd36.com@gmail.com](mailto:lsd36.com@gmail.com); **Baltimore SSN 704**, Pittsburgh, 6/12-14, Shawn



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*Two guys walk into a bar. The third guy ducks.*

**ONE SHOP OWNER** asked another, “Have you had any responses to your ad about hiring a night guard?”

“Yeah,” the other replied. “We got robbed last night.”

**I WAS ADDICTED** to the “Hokey Pokey.” Thankfully, I turned myself around.

**A MAN** walked into a country store and noticed a sign warning, “Danger! Beware of dog!” Inside, he saw a harmless old hound dog asleep on the floor beside the cash register.

“Is that the dog folks are supposed to beware of?” he asked the owner.

“Yep, that’s him,” came the reply.

“He certainly doesn’t look dangerous to me.”

“Before I posted that sign, people kept tripping over him.”

**A JUDGE** entered the courtroom and started the proceedings. “Before this process starts in earnest, there is one thing I have to clear up,” he said. “The plaintiff gave me \$10,000 so I would rule in his favor. The defendant gave me \$12,000 so I would rule in his favor. To make this case a fair one, I am hereby returning \$2,000 to the defendant.”



“I don’t think he likes the new invisible fence.”



**FINANCIALLY** I’m set for life. Provided I die next Wednesday.

**A POLICE OFFICER** found a perfect hiding place to watch for speeding motorists.

One day, he was suspicious when everyone was driving under the speed limit, so he investigated and found the problem. A boy was standing on the side of the road with a huge hand-painted sign: “Radar Trap Ahead.” Going further, the officer discovered another boy about 500 yards beyond the radar trap with a sign reading “Tips” and a bucket full of change.

**THEY SAY** money doesn’t bring you happiness. But it’s better to verify things for yourself.

**“WHY DON’T THEY** give us things we can actually use? I don’t need a thinner phone. You know what I need? A tortilla chip that can support the weight of guacamole.” – Ellen DeGeneres



“I think everyone is paying way too much attention to the elephant in the room.”



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